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F. H. Varley. *Nude with Apple.*
Drawing. Collection: C. S. Band,
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CANADIAN ART

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Cover: Head of a Girl by F. H. Varley. Drawing

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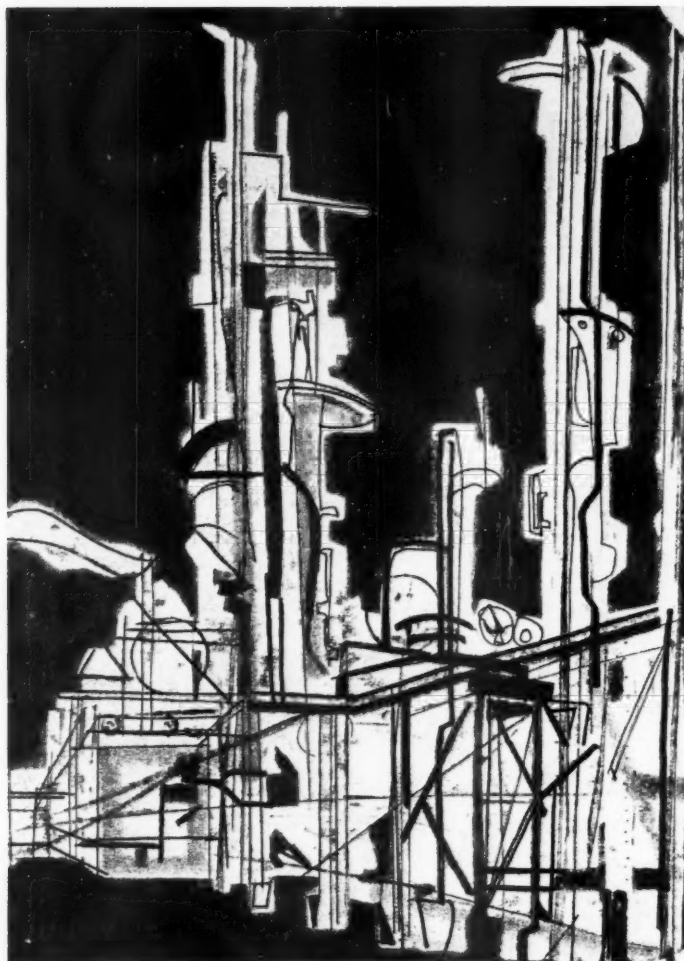
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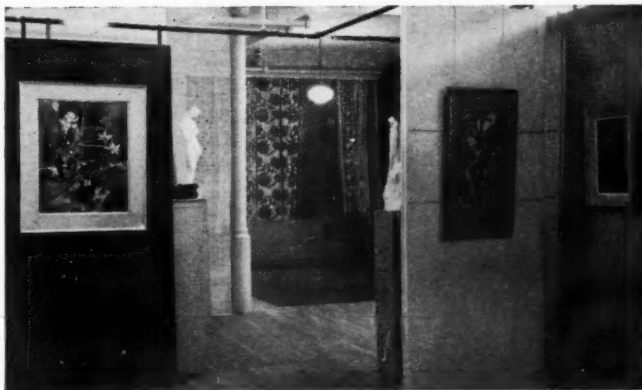
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**THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA
OTTAWA**





F. H. Varley — Fifty Years of His Art

GEORGE ELLIOTT

A half century of the art of F. H. Varley goes on display on October 15 at the Art Gallery of Toronto and later will be shown in Ottawa and Montreal. There are 75 oils, water colours, oil sketches and drawings in this retrospective exhibition. The works shown come from public and private collections from coast to coast. Yet, many as they are, they cannot precisely reflect all the wanderings and searchings of this country's most colourful artist.

SIXTY-FIVE years ago in Sheffield, England, a skinny red-headed child was forced, during an art competition in his school, to copy a steel engraving. Rather than antagonize his father, he did the best he could but he would have preferred to do some sums or mathematics. Today his hair is flaming white and he draws magnificently as if through some supernatural necessity.

Since his childhood in Sheffield, Frederick Horsman Varley has encrusted on himself an impasto of reputations,—for superlative draughtsmanship, for friendships gained and lost, for mysticism, for gregariousness and for independence. If you can separate the man from the painter for a moment, you will see a restless creative spirit trapped in a cycle of recurrent despair, but a cycle relieved now and then by the peaks of artistic achievement.

Varley got over his first distaste for art

quickly. When he was ten he was already enrolled in the Sheffield School of Art where he found skipping classes to go sketching alone to be as much fun as the more regularly scheduled expeditions arranged by his first instructor, Orson Winterbotham.

Later in his youth, as Varley relates, when Henry Archer introduced him to the drawing of the human figure, the lesson began each morning with the ritual of the snuff-stained handkerchief. Archer whipped out his handkerchief, held it taut near a plaster statue.

"Tell me what you see, Frederick".

"A straight line, sir".

"That's right. The thorax is a straight line but remember it is not a cold, lifeless straight line. There is life pushing out from the body. You've got to get that feeling of life pushing out when you put that line on paper."

How well did Varley do at the Sheffield

F. H. VARLEY

Self-portrait

Opposite:

Georgian Bay

*The National Gallery
of Canada*



School of Art? Not badly for a child who didn't like drawing when he started: first class in anatomy and in light-and-shade drawing; second class in drawing from life, drawing from models, drawing from the antique.

He took a consuming passion for the human figure to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Belgium, where Julian de Vriendt hammered home the importance of patience. Varley recalls having finished a painting after weeks of work, only to have it scraped off the canvas by the instructor's palette knife, with instructions to do it over. Doing it over was profitable for the young Yorkshireman. He returned to England with two medals from this academy.

The England to which he returned was in a general social upheaval, and stories of new lands of equality and self-endeavour had already by the turn of the century started a great wave of emigration to Canada. Between 1900 and 1912, Canada's biggest cultural import from the British Isles seemed to be painters or children who would become painters in their adopted land. For example, Bertram Brooker, André Lapine, L. A. C. Pantou, Arthur Lismer, Arthur Gresham, Hubert Valentine Fanshaw and F. H. Varley, all arrived here within months of each other.

Varley left England in 1912 and came to Canada.

He saw that vastness of Ontario which is surely different enough and new enough to hold a painter. Restless as he was, he went north from Toronto to paint the lower edge of the Cambrian shield, rugged, lonely, and, to the eye, full of adventure. Surely that was enough of the new, the fresh and the untouched. But he went on into the Laurentians where the mountains have been smoothed down by time to softly curved hills. He travelled north and west to the still different Lake Superior country. Here was character, a unique character fully satisfying to him in most ways, but there was an urge in him to go further west. On west to the Pacific he eventually went. And the salt air drifted inland to where Varley walked the valleys and peaks of the Coast Range of the mountains. Miles from the Pacific he would run his hand through his pale copper hair and feel the

saltiness of it. He would lick the corners of his mouth and get the salt tang. This was the universe holding Varley in thrall. Up in the mountains, the bold masses of rock grew bigger and "the bigger they get, the better the form". Heights were not all. He stopped on his walks and turned to look back down the long valleys and it was like looking through an ice cube: the air was so clear, so pure, so entirely different from anything he had ever imagined. "You look, you close your eyes, you look again and it's still there—all the grandeur and beauty of it."

But before his life on the West Coast there was to be an interlude in Europe. By the time the First World War broke out Varley, who was living in Toronto, was exhibiting at the Ontario Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy. Later he was appointed an official artist for the Canadian War Memorials. On the eve of his departure for England the *Canadian Courier* said: "F. Horsman Varley is well known to all readers of the *Courier*. His covers and illustrations have already stamped him as a man upon whom a patch of earth and sky or a lump of human figure gets a powerful grip. I don't think he is strong on scenery or that he cares much for what may be called a mere landscape. Observation of this north-of-Englander as he bangs about here in Canada suggests that he goes hard after the big, essential virilities. Above all things he admires strength and realism. Not what a thing seems to be but what it is; not the glamour or the chiaroscuro—enough of it for his purpose, but no more—but the strong massing of forms and colours that leaves the impress of a recreated reality. Varley would have made a strong sculptor. He seems to demand mass and heft in his work. He has had a lot of experience that knocks the guff out of any man. He knows what it is to be a wayside man without enough to eat, a dock wallop, a companion of those who never see three meals straight ahead in a row, the knights of the empty pocket and the full soul. He believes in the splash of rain on the pelt, the bite of the hard wind, the glint of a naked, hot sun."

Varley's reaction to war was best summed up by the *London Nation* in 1919: "More than ten million people, mainly men, have died

F. H. VARLEY

*Portrait of
Vincent Massey,
1920*

*Collection:
Hart House,
University
of Toronto*



F. H. VARLEY

Sir John Parkin

*Collection:
G. Raleigh Parkin,
Montreal*



F. H. VARLEY

Gipsy Head

*The National Gallery
of Canada*

violent deaths in Europe. Why? It is no use going to Burlington House to find out. The pictures merely present you with the question. You may see, in a measure, how the soldiers died, and what killed them; but as to what condemned them to death, the Sphinx is headless. There is one picture by Capt. F. H. Varley, of a tip-cart. It is canted on the side of a shell-crater which is nearly full of drainage. Beyond it, in that winter light which in Flanders seemed to have a quality of indescribable austerity, to be quite alien and other-world, and disciplined with exactitude across a stretch of ochreous muck, is a parade of neat little white crosses. One of a labor battalion leans on his spade and contemplates the cart. More work! It is loaded with a tangle of legs

and arms. The title of the picture is: "For What . . . ?" Who can say? Who dares to put that question, not to the world, but to himself? The question was put to his mother by a school-boy while this writer stood by. She looked at the picture critically, and then evaded the boy's question. 'There it is,' she said, pointing to the legend in the catalogue. The question of the soldier artists is rarely as direct as Capt. Varley's."

New Zealand was where Varley meant to go after the war but he agreed to stay long enough in Toronto to do one portrait. It was of Dean Cappon of Queen's University. It was hung in the exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists and its appearance led to Varley receiving commissions from several

prominent Toronto families. However, at that time Sir Edmund Walker, then Chairman of the Board of the National Gallery of Canada, advised against the use of Varley in one instance when he said, "Varley can do men and gypsies but I see nothing in his work to lead me to believe he can do children".

Much of Varley's success in the twenties, came from his association with a prominent young art collector of the time, Vincent Massey, as prominent then in the life of Toronto as he is now in the history of Canada as our first Canadian-born governor general. His patronage of Varley started in the spring of 1920 with the painting of the Vincent Massey portrait which now hangs in Hart House, University of Toronto. In the autumn of the same year, Varley exhibited a portrait of Mr. Massey's father. The next autumn he painted Mr. Massey's father-in-law, Sir George Parkin, and in the spring of 1925 he completed a portrait of the late Mrs. Vincent Massey.

There is no need to recount the origin of the Group of Seven. It is sufficient to remember that it was not a particularly cohesive group. If there is such a thing as a Group of Seven style in relation to northern landscape, Varley comes close enough to this at times to show he was in sympathy with the Group's objectives. However, Varley's creative genius was individual; working within the loosely knit framework of the Group, his independent spirit kept alive the art of portrait painting in an atmosphere almost wholly preoccupied with landscape.

As the Group matured, Varley proved he could handle both landscape and the human figure but he was principally involved with the divinity of the human body in his painting.

A minority report on Varley occurred in 1930 when the *Mail and Empire* said, in reference to the Group of Seven, "F. H. Varley is represented by a collection of meaningless pictures of women which are after psychic effects and are painted in sickly colours which remind one of cheap candies."

Recently Varley said of his taking the post of head of the department of drawing and painting at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Art, as it was then known, "When I went to Vancouver in 1926 they

offered me \$500 less than I asked and I accepted. They thought I was a fine fellow for accepting but I built the place up. I was appalled the director never went sketching. He did things that looked like something from Italy. I said to him, 'Break away from all that. Sit and look at things. Let them speak to you'." Varley instructed both day and night classes at the school. He was a "hectic" teacher, but kindly, and liked playing practical jokes on his students if he could.



F. H. VARLEY. *Girl with Long Braid*. Drawing
Collection: Dr. Henry Thompson, Toronto

Varley embarked on this Vancouver period of his career in a quiet, orderly manner. His children gave him much happiness. At the same time, the readings of the doctrines of Buddhism had become a serious stimulant to his intellect.

The painting *Dharana* reveals a little of how his mind was working in Vancouver. The Buddhist states, "there can be no higher goal than the union of the soul with the Supreme Lord. To accomplish such union it is necessary for the student to pass through eight stages: self control (yoma); religious observance (niyama); postures (asana); regulations of the breath (pranayama); restraint of the senses (pratyahara); steadying the mind (dharana); meditation (dhyana); and profound contemplation (samadhi). The last three stages are seldom reached." In reaching even dharana, "the body must be brought to heel as an obedient dog."

A restless pilgrim in search of form, Varley crossed an entire continent from east to west; he even went on an expedition into the Arctic.

In his 40 years in Canada he has never identified himself with any group or society for long. Always at the critical moment of apparent achievement some ill-tempered fate would lure Varley out of any association. The Ontario Society of Artists, the Royal Canadian

Academy saw his name come and go on their members' lists.

And when another world war came along, this rugged individualist, nearing 60, found himself vaguely superfluous in the new and vigorous climate of war production. He taught in Ottawa for a while during the war years. Montreal caught a glimpse of him, so did Toronto.

The post-war urge for recreational activities cast a subdued limelight on him which he enjoyed. Local amateur art associations discovered Varley was a charming, warm-hearted instructor for their week-end classes. So did the summer students at the Doon School of Fine Arts near Kitchener where he taught for two seasons.

Today Frederick Horsman Varley enjoys three great achievements: he has played the part of himself in a National Film Board production; his life's work is being exhibited this fall in the three great Canadian cities of Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal; he is annually being discovered by each new class of students at the Ontario College of Art, many of whom admit surprise at finding that this founder of the Group of Seven is still alive and painting in Toronto. But this startling and lonely man is very much alive and has been very much alive all his life. This year's retrospective proves it.

F. H. VARLEY. *German Prisoners.* The National Gallery of Canada
Canadian War Memorials Collection



What the Public Wants

LAWREN HARRIS

THERE is today a greater variety of styles in art than at any time in the past, hence there are more ways of classifying works of art than ever before. But in order to write something pertinent about public response to contemporary painting it is necessary to confine the many styles to four main kinds of art which are meant to include all styles and idioms. These are commercial art, academic art, derivative art and creative art, all of them necessary if the public is to see and experience a full range of art expression.

The function of commercial art is a different one from that of the other three kinds of art. Its purpose is to achieve a direct, instantaneous appeal to the widest possible public. Its illustrations are made as enticing, as attractive, as attention commanding and, in many cases, as sensuous as possible, so that in the vast majority of commercial illustrations, direct, arresting appeal comes first and any art values second. But the best commercial art today combines both appeal and art values and the very best may be works of art. Which points to the fact that those artists whose work is the best in its particular field elevate its standard and thus create new values.

The paintings and drawings of the other three kinds of art appeal to a much smaller and somewhat different public than that for commercial art. If we assume that two per cent of the population takes an interest in art which many gallery directors and publicists consider to be the average in most countries, then academic paintings will receive the widest response from this two per cent because they conform to long established patterns and styles which have conditioned the seeing of the public. Such paintings can be produced in endless variations and yet remain familiar and acceptable to most people. There is, however, in the field of academic art a dividing line between those paintings which show a marked conformity and those which tend toward a freer creative expression. Those artists whose work becomes more creative realize that the

best in art arises from diversity, never from conformity.

Then follow, in order of public preference, derivative paintings, whether derived from a school, such as the school of Paris, or from any one of the recent great innovators such as Cézanne, Matisse, Klee, Braque or Picasso. A part of the interested public is somewhat familiar with the works of these great creative artists through reproductions and welcomes native examples of the use of their styles as expressions of modern creative vitality.

Thus we see that both the academic and derivative artist are in part sustained by visual and technical factors derived from outside influences which they can never quite make entirely their own. In the beginning their work is dependent upon these accepted modes as much as on their own creative powers and, even as they develop, their work never entirely loses its conformity or its derivative characteristics. Thus original freshness of vision and its created style are replaced in some degree by accepted procedures and styles.

Lastly we come to the new works of contemporary creative art. These paintings are the least understood at the time they are painted and therefore the farthest removed from immediate public approval. They are at first familiar only to a minority of intuitive and imaginative individuals. They are unfamiliar to the majority because the paintings of creative artists embody new emotional and spatial tensions, new and unforeseen spectra of experience and new aesthetic and technical procedures to express the new vision. Such paintings are never what the public wants. Indeed, they excite opposition at first and yet it is the best of such advanced paintings that become the summit of creative achievement in art in every age and country.

The creative artist like the creative scientist or the creative individual in any pursuit is always ahead of his public in his particular field. If this were not so, progress in the understanding of art would not be possible nor any



PAUL PEEL. *The Model*
The National Gallery of Canada

*"... academic paintings will
receive the widest response ..."*



GEORGE HORNE RUSSELL. *Early Spring*
The National Gallery of Canada

*"Then follow, in order of public preference,
derivative paintings ..."*

increase in the range and variety of art expressions and styles that afford the means of progress. For progress in understanding and increase of awareness are dependent on realms of experience that always lie ahead of any public and the creative artist has always been the explorer of these new realms. So that all progress in art ultimately depends on the artist pressing past his limitations and members of the public doing likewise in their response. In both cases this involves a creative act, a heightening of creative awareness.

There is not just one undifferentiated public. The public is made up of individuals with different perceptions and degrees of awareness so that if we were to ask an artist to paint "what the public wants" he would be bewildered. He could not decide what part of it he should try to satisfy. Should it be business men or housewives, country folk or city people, young people or old folks, saints or sinners, politicians or simple people? Should he paint a literal or an imaginative work, a profound or a light-hearted one, a sentimental or austere one? The creative artist does not think in this way and cannot paint in those terms.

Moreover the plain fact is that the public does not know what it wants or, rather, public wants are constantly changing. This is so because people have potentialities far beyond their present reactions. This means that given any interest in art it is inevitable that present wants will become past satisfactions and new wants will arise and in turn find their satisfactions and so on until the individual comes to participate in the life of the greatest works.

The opinion is widely held today that the new expressions in art are out of touch with public response. But all new and significant works of art that have been acclaimed in our time were once ahead of public response. For new creative works of art always make such demands on the onlooker at first that he has to go far more than half way to meet them. Indeed, he has to go all the way. He has to achieve a completely responsive attitude before he can understand them. This means he has to by-pass his prejudices, transcend his habits of seeing and allow his awareness to function in order to experience their import. There are fortunately some who are not only

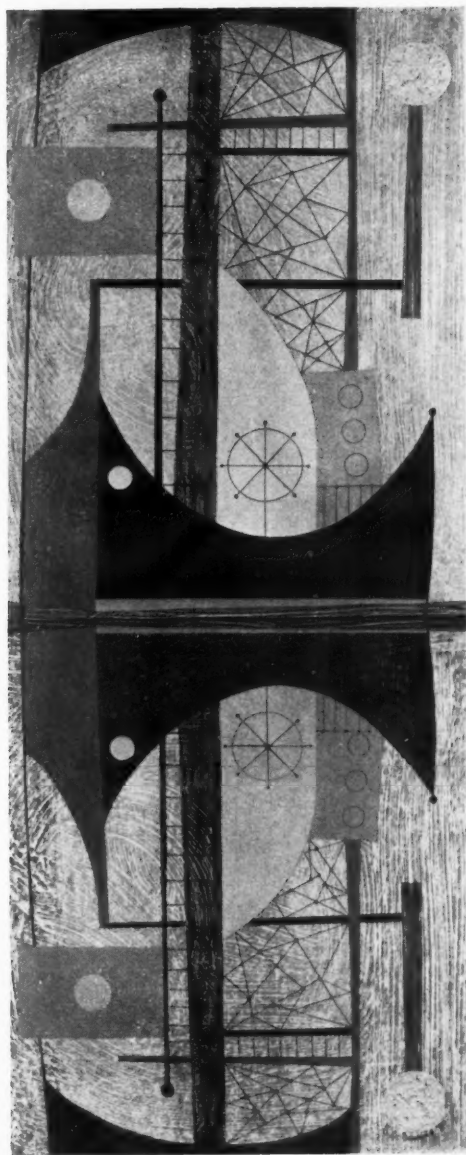
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*"... new works of
contemporary creative
art ... the least
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they are painted and
therefore the furthest
removed from immediate
public approval."*



PAUL-ÉMILE BORDUAS

La Cavale infernale

Collection:

Luc Choquette, Montreal

willing to do this but keen to do so, because it results in most rewarding creative experiences. Their number increases with the increase of new and vital works of art. They constitute the creative vanguard of appreciators who open the door to new understanding for many that follow.

The time lag between new creative work and its acceptance by a part of the public is today shorter than it has ever been. This is so because the number of people who are ready and willing, and in some cases even avid, to accept new expressions has increased in recent years. These are individuals who have followed the many new manifestations and have come thereby to recognize that creative life in art has entered a new realm of expressive possibilities and hence they look for new and significant expressions. It would seem, therefore, that new and real creative talent is less likely to be overlooked than ever before.

George Russell, the Irish poet, painter and editor, known as A.E., once wrote, "I am certain nothing first class came when the artist's mind was fixed on his public rather than on his subject."

The reason for this is simple. Artists of every kind can only achieve their best when their entire attention is focussed on the work in hand. Any distraction while the artist is at work, such as consideration of public sanction or acclaim, diminishes concentration and thus weakens the dynamics of creative power. The greater the concentration on the work in hand the better it is sure to be because vitality and significance and clarity and coherence at their most expressive can come only from such concentration. Indeed, concentration is the essential discipline required both to initiate the creative act and to carry it through to realization. Thus any thought of satisfying any part of the public while engaged on a painting defeats the purpose of art.

Moreover, in every venture the creative artist begins with a subject, an idea or intimation which is not clearly formed in his mind and heart. Once he starts the creative process of clarification toward unity of expression and the painting begins "to live", it then takes hold and will lead him into ways that he did not foresee. He may even express emotions

he had not previously experienced or he may be led to create a dynamic symbol that will surprise himself. In this process every creative artist alters his technique and may invent new means of expression in each new work and he develops his imagination as he does so. These ways he must respect and follow in utter disregard of whether the result will please or displease a public.

When the French impressionists first painted their pictures, their faculties were concentrated on the creative endeavour to embody in paint on canvas a new vision of nature. It would have been impossible for them to do this had they given any consideration to what the public wanted. For there was then no public which could want such paintings seeing that they were unknown.

We know definitely that Cézanne never painted to please any part of the public. He painted as he said "to realize", meaning thereby to embody in paint his vision of a new fullness of form by using colour in a more plastic way than ever before. We know from Van Gogh's letters that he never had a public in mind when he painted. It was the expression of his all-consuming devotion that he sought and which dictated the rhythms of his brush strokes and the radiant living colour of his paint.

If those Canadian artists who were the first to paint the Canadian landscape with new vision, that is in its own terms, had painted it as most Canadians then thought it should be painted, that is as though seen through the eyes of the circumspect English or the tidy Dutch and Barbizon romantic artists, there would have been no beginning of an art expressive of the wild and rugged character of this country and which later on was accepted by many Canadians.

If Emily Carr had painted the kind of pictures the people in Victoria once wanted, the result would have been a series of maidenly and innocuous water colours. These would have had no relation whatever to the bold paintings of the full rhythms, depth and mystery of the West Coast forest and Indian totems she did paint and which were ignored or rejected by the popular taste of her day.

The best in art in any country never origi-

nates in terms of "what the public wants". No creative artist paints to please the public although he may be very gratified when his work finds favour with some part of the public. While at work the creative artist no more thinks of a public than a surgeon does while performing an operation or a scientist when engaged in the process of research. As an enthusiastic amateur said, "painting uses the whole of your head, there is no room for thought or feeling of other than the picture."

top of his capacity, always at the forefront of his nature, for it is there and only there that he is receptive to intimations and can begin to visualize and create works that may afford a people an answer to the needs of their developing awareness. If this were not so the great works of the past would never have come to be revered.

In this profound sense the creative artist is one with the people. This is a very different and much deeper thing than any attempt to

LAWREN HARRIS

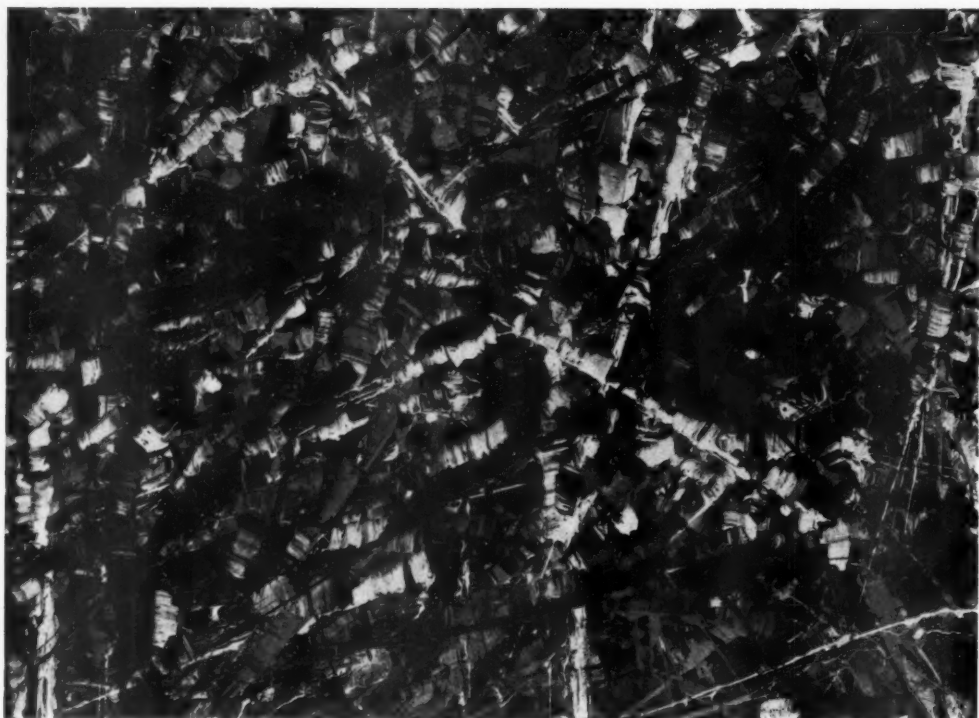
*In Memoriam
to a Canadian
Painter*



If an artist is to clarify and bring to life what he paints, it demands undeviating concentration on the work in hand. If the painting comes alive and it becomes clear and meaningful to him, then it is bound eventually to become clear and meaningful to each perceptive onlooker in accordance with the degree of his awareness. There is no other way.

Finally, the entire value of creative life in art depends on the conviction, devotion and unswerving aesthetic integrity of the creative artist and these qualities can only prove creatively fruitful if he is not coerced, dictated to or thwarted in his work. The drive of the creative in him leads him to paint at the

satisfy public taste. Indeed it is a mystery at the very heart of human interdependence. When the creative artist is most intent on his work, at the height of his own conviction and power, he then can find the answer to the hidden needs of a people. What is vague, unexpressed and unformed in the heart of a people he can then clarify, organize and project in his work. He thus represents the hidden, not yet known needs slumbering within his fellow men and their responsive potentialities. It is in one sense these two factors working within him that are creative. In this deep sense, the artist and the people are interdependent, as necessary to one another for illumination as the negative and positive forces in electricity.



JEAN-PAUL RIOPELLE. *Tocsin*

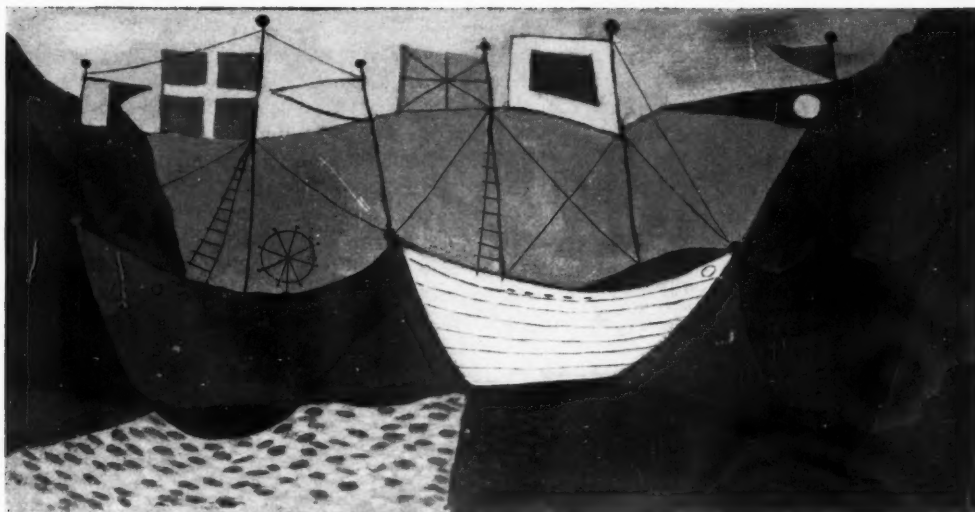
The National Gallery of Canada

PAUL-EMILE BORDUAS. *Figure aux oiseaux*

Passadoit Gallery



*Three of the
paintings shown
in the Canadian
Section of the
XXVII Biennale*



B. C. BINNING. *Convoy at Rendezvous*

Collection: C. S. Band, Toronto

Show Window of the Arts — XXVII Venice Biennale

R. H. HUBBARD

The foreword of the catalogue of the Venice Biennale of 1954 uses the phrase *artium portus*, haven of the arts, to describe this exhibition. This International Biennial Exhibition of Art is sponsored by an independent organization which receives strong support from the city of Venice and the Italian state. The first Biennale took place in 1895 with 15 countries participating, all of them European except for the United States. In 1954, 32 countries are represented, including Australia, and five from Asia, four from Latin America and two from North America. Of the 18 European nations four are from behind the Iron Curtain. Merely from the standpoint of this representation it may be understood why the Biennale is looked upon as the great gathering place of contemporary art. It is more than *artium portus*: it is *artium spectaculum omnium terrarum*, a show window for the art of the whole world.

THERE is a good deal of the spectacle about the Biennale, for it is in a good position to inherit the traditional Venetian love of pageantry. Venice was *en fête* for the opening day on June 19. St. Mark's Square was decorated with flags and rich hangings suspended from the windows of the buildings; the great official barges with liveried crews solemnly passed towards the Gardens where a ceremony took place before the President of the Republic; a Marco Polo septingentenary was celebrated in the afternoon; and the day

closed with a concert of Vivaldi's music performed in St. Mark's against a background of softly illuminated mosaics.

Before this climax, however, the commissioners of the various countries had spent a week preparing their pavilions or sections and talking about them to journalists and official visitors from all nations. Every morning we would leave our hotels in the St. Mark's quarter, walk to the landing-stage of the water-bus (the *vaporetto*) and ride three or four stops to the Public Gardens. Here we would

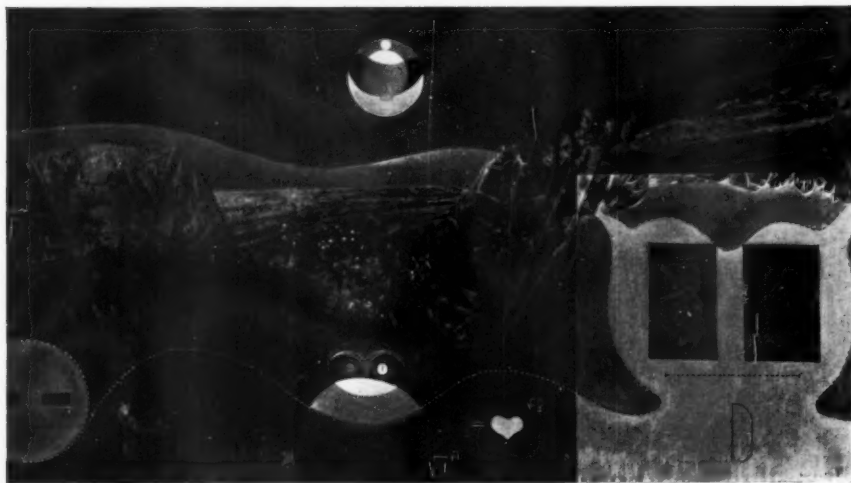
alight, then walk past the Paradiso, the restaurant where we would later lunch so pleasantly in the open, and up a main alley to a large white building. This, the Italian pavilion, had a maze-like interior through which I learned to find my way to the single room which had been lent to Canada, similar to the equally small galleries allotted to other countries which as yet had no pavilions of their own. Along the central avenue and several subsidiary ones were scattered the 20 pavilions of foreign countries. An elderly British pavilion in red brick stood tall and dignified at the end of one side alley, flanked on one hand by the low rambling French pavilion and on the other by the cold grey German one. A short distance away was a miniature Jeffersonian temple built some years ago to house the American exhibits. Not far off, but screened by thick shrubbery, lurked a melancholy and ruinous structure bearing the inscription U.S.S.R. and the somewhat incongruous date 1914. It has not been used for some years.

Most interesting to me were the newer pavilions in contemporary style. The gleaming white Austrian and the soft red brick Swiss buildings were good examples, but the Dutch pavilion, newly designed by one of the pioneers of *De Stijl*, was one of the handsomest and most satisfying halls for the exhibition of pictures which I have yet seen. Even countries so young or small as Israel and Venezuela have built pavilions in the last year or so. Un-

fortunately the available land is almost gone, and the Biennale has called on CIAM, the international organization of architects, to advise on the best use of what remains. The moral is that countries intending to build pavilions should do so immediately. The land is provided free, the only expense to the exhibiting country being the cost of the building itself (about the equivalent of a modest house in Canada) and its outfitting every second year.

Over four thousand works of art of all kinds were on view, to be seen very carefully if, as I was, you were a *commissario* on the international jury to award the prizes. The large Italian pavilion, besides some miles of contemporary Italian painting, provided several special features. One was the Courbet retrospective, held in accordance with the policy of showing an important exhibition of one of the pioneers of modern art at each Biennale. The Courbet exhibition was organized by Germain Bazin of the Louvre and included as one of the 52 examples borrowed from museums in various countries *Les Rochers à Etretat*, presented to the National Gallery of Canada by the late H. S. Southam. This fine landscape occupied a prominent place in the centre of the principal gallery where it was remarked upon by many for the excellence of its quality and condition which showed to advantage Courbet's colour and spatial effects

MAX ERNST. *The Phases of the Night*



for the most part lost in the darkly varnished works lent by other museums.

Another feature of the main building was the group of three retrospectives arranged by the Biennale to set the general theme of this year's exhibition as a whole. These were by three pioneers of surrealism, Max Ernst, Jean Arp and Joan Miro. The exhibitions were compact and well chosen, that of Miro being to my mind the most significant both in terms of its scope and quality and of the widespread influence exercised by this artist on all forms of contemporary art and design.

The surrealist theme, duly announced in advance to all participating countries, governed the choices of most national representations, with the notable exception of the communist countries where orthodoxy frowns upon surrealism, as it does on abstraction, as manifestations of "bourgeois formalism" and permits only "socialist realism". Several other retrospective showings in the national pavilions also echoed the main theme, especially the Paul Klee exhibition in the German pavilion. The large Munch exhibition sponsored by Norway had what might be considered an ancestral bearing on the theme. It would have been quite impossible to bind all the contemporary showings by the theme of surrealism, as surrealism is, strictly speaking, a thing of the past, but it provided a basis and a justification for the universal one of non-objective art which was to be seen in almost every pavilion. It was an example of a main theme with developments and variations.

The very large showing of contemporary Italian painting and sculpture was a case in point. A complicated but evidently fair method of selection virtually forbade adherence to one theme: at any rate there are doubtless many different elements to satisfy in the Italian art world. The Italian committees first chose a limited number of living artists to be represented by retrospectives; among them were not only past and present adherents of surrealism such as de Chirico (who declined the honour) but also an aged impressionist or two. The committees then chose a number of artists to hold one-man shows of their recent work, and these included such interesting figures as the radical primitive Capogrossi

whose large canvases are covered with huge magical symbols; several non-objective painters of high order such as Santomaso, Prampolini and Afro; and such important sculptors as Marini, Mirko and Consagra. (Marini also declined the honour this year). But there was also Carlo Levi whose series of pathetic studies of poor peasants illustrating his book *Christ at Eboli* were highly approved by the "socialist realists". Still another group of painters was chosen to be represented by smaller numbers of works, and finally a considerable number of works were admitted which had been submitted to a jury. On the whole the Italian showing gave an impression of great vitality. Ancient traditions have once again given rise in Italy to a new and important school of painting and sculpture, as well as one of architecture.

In the various pavilions the basic theme also admitted of recent developments and contrasts. Thus the British section, well organized by the British Council, contained not only groups of paintings by the surrealists Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud and sculptures by Reg Butler but also a retrospective by the gentle abstractionist Ben Nicholson. The German pavilion included, besides the retrospectives by Klee and Oskar Schlemmer, a variety of living painters and some interesting free sculptural creations in wire by Hans Uhlmann. With the latter, Austria's sculptors such as Leinfellner, Bertoni and Biljan-Bilger seemed to indicate important new plastic developments in those countries. The American contribution, arranged by René d'Harnancourt of the Museum of Modern Art, included only two painters: Willem de Kooning whose recent figures are of a most fantastic order and Ben Shahn whose "magic realism" is not too far removed from "socialist realism" except by its very high quality. France in an over-crowded pavilion presented an encyclopaedic review of her painting under five or six headings. The best section was that labelled abstract art which included vigorous free painting by Hartung and Nicolas de Staël; the worst was an ill-assorted group of paintings lumped together under the label of Les Fauves, comprising works by Matisse, Derain, Rouault, Vlaminck and Van Dongen, a num-



Left: JEAN ARP. *Tolomeo*. Right: MIRKO. *Chimera*

ber of them undistinguished and only one, a Van Dongen, coming from the Fauve period, 1905-8. Belgium carried out the general theme in a novel way, presenting an exhibition of fantastic art from Bosch to Magritte and Delvaux. Holland featured among others her big brash painter Karel Appel. Spain, presumably as part of her programme of cultural refurbishment, showed a series of small Dali water colours and prints by Miro. Vigorous painters were to be found in the Egyptian, Swiss, Israeli and Brazilian sections; the Japanese section only went to prove how universal is the sway of non-objective painting today.

Four Commonwealth countries besides

Great Britain participated: India, South Africa, Australia and Canada. India's current hesitation between tradition and modernism was very evident. Australia shared a small room with South Africa which left too little space for the work of her controversial painters, Dobell, Drysdale and Nolan. Canada, interpreting the general theme broadly, also tailored her showing to the limited space available in a single room in the Italian pavilion. A total of 13 works was divided among three painters only: Jean-Paul Riopelle and his teacher Paul-Emile Borduas to represent the "automatic" side of contemporary painting and B. C. Binning to represent the more precise and

intellectual side. A definite impact was made in spite of these limitations,—probably even because of them, for the paintings had plenty of breathing space on the walls. (One huge Riopelle had almost an entire wall to itself). In arranging our section thus, we were profiting from the example of the British who several years ago adopted the principle of the simple, effective presentation of one or two artists at each Biennale, with the understanding that different artists would be chosen in succeeding years. This lesson has not yet been learned by the French.

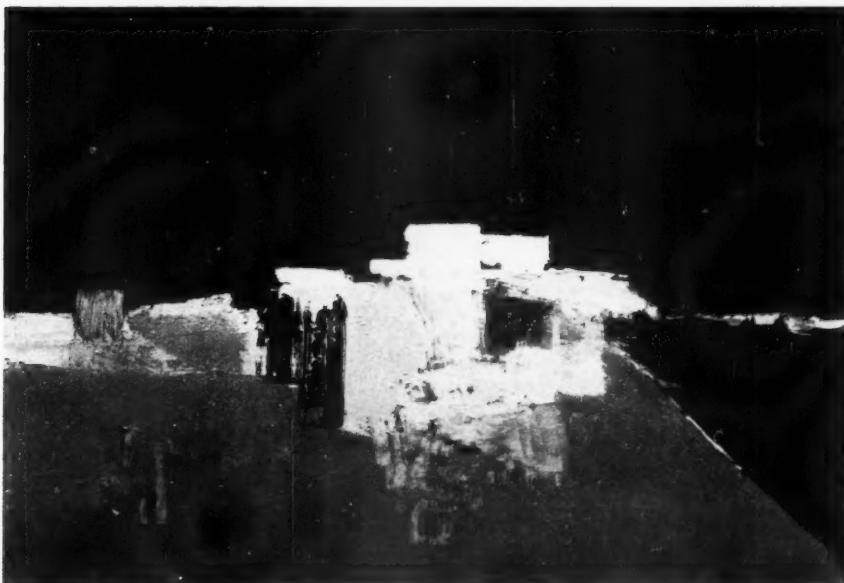
During the days of the press review a good number of favourable comments were heard on the Canadian section. Among the critics Denys Sutton, in the *Daily Telegraph*, spoke in the same breath of Riopelle and the big names of contemporary art, adding that Riopelle is one of the most gifted painters of today. Robert Melville in *The Listener* also refers to his paintings as being among "the largest and most sumptuous canvases at the Biennale" and speaks of his having "inherited from the old masters of the modern movement an unquenchable thirst for spontaneity that is

giving paint its ultimate lustre . . ." David Sylvester, of *The Times* and *Encounter*, showed a lively interest in the originality of Borduas. Examples by Binning and Riopelle were reproduced in the catalogue. A number of artists including Max Ernst, Arp and Gino Severini, expressed themselves very warmly on the Canadian representation.

In contrast with the otherwise universal adoption of non-objective painting were the contributions of the communist countries. In these pavilions where "social realism" was enthroned one saw numerous works illustrating the struggles of the proletariat in pre-revolutionary times and the collective efforts of today. The quality of the work ranged from the impressive sculptures of the senior Polish artist Dunikowski and the expressive drawings of Kulisiewicz, who is also a Pole, to the magazine illustration type of painting represented in the picture of a strike by one of the Romanians, Miklossy. Czechoslovakia along with Yugoslavia seems to admit more of originality, but none shows anything stylistically later than 1915.

Jury day brought out this cleavage between

NICOLAS DE STAËL. *Sicilian Landscape*



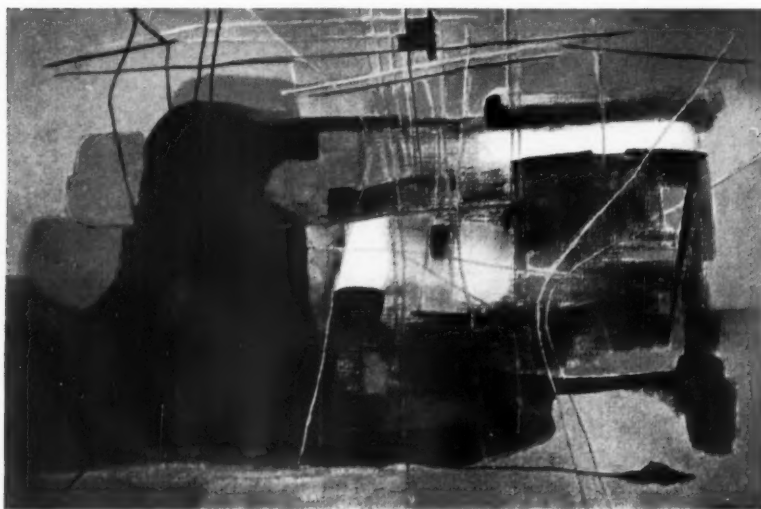
the communist and non-communist worlds in an interesting way. The all-day meetings which took place in the great heat of an Italian summer day resembled a miniature United Nations. The polite but insistent French, the diplomatic British and Belgians and Dutch, the ebullient Egyptians—all were there; and the Iron Curtain exercised the veto or the nearest thing to it. For they would vote for no one but the “social realists” and when these were eliminated they would turn in blank ballots. No one was surprised, however, when the principal international prizes went to the trio who had been invited by the Biennale to hold retrospectives. Ernst, Arp and Miro won the prizes for painting, sculpture and graphic arts respectively, and thus we canonized the saints of surrealism. The Italian prizes were awarded to the painter Santomaso and the sculptor Fazzini. Other lesser prizes went to Ben Nicholson, the Brazilian Arnaldo d’Horta and the Pole Kulisiewicz. That evening saw a triumphal progress through St. Mark’s Square of Max Ernst, his wife, his dog and his friends, as the modern counterpart to many a procession in the more splendid days of Venice.

Venice is the perfect meeting place. It is also perfect for an exhibition such as the Biennale because of the absence of metropolitan distractions, especially motor cars. Relaxation is in the air, and people are at their

best in these magical surroundings. Informal meetings with artists and with one’s colleagues from other countries, discussions at meal times and in the Piazza in the evenings, and the sight of so many works of art amounted to a liberal education for me and many others. There one could not help but discuss such questions as the emergence of a universal language of art in the form of non-objective painting,—only to be confronted by the problem of finding out what that language was expressing. Have we at last achieved a universal language only to find that it cannot express anything?

There were few signs, it seemed, of any new movement in art beyond automatic painting, as some have wishfully thought to discern. Certainly there is no significant return to subject-matter. In fact, the painting of human or social documents, even if they have the high quality of a Shahn, seemed somehow hopelessly provincial at Venice amid the welter of free painting. But whatever the trends of the future, I felt that in painting Canada is at present definitely in the running, just as she is in the thick of world politics and economics; and moreover that, although we may have lost our delightful provincialism, our local colour, yet paradoxically enough, our youthful creativeness seems to rise to the challenge of the world at large. Is it only familiarity or do I rightly see in our contemporary painting a little more clearly than in the art of other

Continued on page 37



GIUSEPPE
SANTOMASO

*Il muro
del pescatore*

The Growth of Three Small Galleries

Though they have their serious and sometimes baffling problems, the local galleries of Canada present, on the whole, "a cheering picture", the Massey Commission found. The Report lists 10 Grade A fireproof galleries and nine other centres, and it makes no recommendation regarding them. Obviously, the local gallery is a matter of local autonomy and any national support it might get, apart from receiving the travelling exhibitions of the National Gallery, would have to be worked out by the Canada Council when it is appointed. In the early days of the Federation of Canadian Artists, nothing occupied the attention and the energies of the Federation more than the needs of the smaller communities of the nation and much study was given to proposals for the establishment of community art centres. One result was the setting up of the Western Canada Art Circuit which links the various western centres together and keeps feeding them exhibitions. No one appears to take very seriously the suggestion put forward by one group that the National Gallery be de-centralized and branches set up in different centres but, even if this were feasible, or even desirable, it would not provide for the innumerable smaller communities. They might get some encouragement from outside, but they must act on their own initiative and take care of their own needs. Many of them have no desire for an art gallery of any kind. When the Federation was making its survey, it discovered that to many people the community centre meant facilities for sports and square dances and perhaps hobbies. The following three articles tell of two communities, one in Manitoba and the other in Quebec, that did desire a local gallery, how they went about getting it, and some of their problems; and of a third small gallery which is in quite a different category but, while starting from the opposite end, makes a contribution to the life of the community.

The Brandon Art Club

ALTHOUGH without a gallery building of its own, the Brandon Art Club is one of the largest users of the facilities provided by the Western Canada Art Circuit. In the prairie provinces only cities like Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon, all possessing galleries with permanent quarters and directors or curators, attempt anything like Brandon's programme which this season consisted of 12 bookings from the Circuit, and five displays arranged locally, all of which were shown in the Brandon Public Library.

The latter included the exhibition of the Manitoba Society of Artists, a demonstration on the making of ceramics by Leo Mol of Winnipeg, a demonstration and talk on print-making by William McCloy and Richard Bowman of the University of Manitoba, an exhibition of painting and crafts done by the Eskimos and Indians at the Brandon Sanitarium under the direction of Audrey Taylor of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and finally a demonstration and exhibit of the art work of

the school children of Brandon. In addition, local artists were giving continuous showings in another building, and a larger show is being arranged for them this autumn, also in the public library.

How did this come about? Well, like Topsy, it "just grew". Some eight years ago the suggestion of obtaining an exhibition from the National Gallery of Canada was proposed to and accepted by the Brandon Art Club. Good space was rented at the local C.N.R. hotel, and for three days and evenings a continual stream of people saw the many choice works in the exhibition we secured, "The Development of Painting in Canada", which was then on tour. The school children were brought in groups and short talks given to them each time; certain members of the art club were hoarse from the effort before it was all over.

Some two to three thousand people saw and enjoyed the paintings. So the Brandon Art Club, which had been formed in 1906 as a study group, and had now grown to one

hundred members, decided to promote the regular showing of original works of art. The rooms of the Brandon Public Library were offered by the librarian, Mr. Carrick, for certain selected exhibitions, and, with what might be called gay abandon, we decided to join the newly formed Western Canada Art Circuit. The late Alex Musgrove, then in charge of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, was delegated to choose for us four exhibitions for the first year, and six for the next. Since 1950, the writer has been attending the annual meetings of the circuit, and we now take from ten to fourteen exhibitions each season.

Finances! The city council was approached; we were allowed a tag day in lieu of a grant and have had one for three years. It nets around five hundred dollars; this, with the proceeds of silver collections, taken on the opening days of exhibitions, balances our budget.

The Brandon Public Library is in a former bank building; made of stone, it meets most insurance regulations; there is also a caretaker in residence. The library board, being sympathetic, has made available what space it has by putting up mouldings for the hanging of pictures and by installing plugs for the use of our special lights. They have allowed us excellent space for packing and storage and the present librarian, Mr. Coleman, helps us with the packing and hanging of the exhibits. We have also large folding screens, covered with

hessian, to take prints or unframed pictures.

Working under the executive of the Brandon Art Club is a chairman of exhibitions, with a vice-chairman who does all the publicity. Fine co-operation is had from the press. Another member of the committee is in charge of "crew", and she sees that there are on hand a sufficient number of "bodies" to do the packing, unpacking and hanging. Nearly always one exhibit comes down and the next goes up on the same day. This work crew is composed of club members (or husbands of members) and our rating with the National Gallery, for packing, has gone from an original "fair" to "good". Also the transportation companies are alert and eager to see that no accidents happen to a shipment while it is in Brandon.

A new display is "opened" every three weeks, usually on a Sunday afternoon, with the social committee serving coffee and providing a background of soft music. Frequently, we have had someone declare the exhibition "open", such as the mayor, the chairman of the school board or the library board, the local regent of the I.O.D.E., all persons drawn from groups which have shown interest and given support. Latterly, we have often had film showings of related subjects and these have proved very popular. An attendance book is kept, and printed cards, announcing a new exhibition, are sent to those signing, as well as others on our list. The library is becoming



An "open-house" programme, whereby the public could visit several interesting private collections in Brandon, was used to help raise funds for the Brandon Art Club. Seen at that time was this painting, Schooners in Ice Floes, Baie St.-Paul by Clarence A. Gagnon, in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. D. R. Doig.

a pleasant spot to make a trip to on a Sunday afternoon; even seasons of bad weather and "no bus on Sundays" does not deter those interested.

Two events have been of major importance in our history. One was when the Brandon Art Club played host to the annual meeting of the Western Art Circuit in 1952, when we had as our special guest, Mrs. H. A. Dyde of Edmonton, a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada. The second was when the Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, the Governor General of Canada, commenced his official tour of the city in 1952 with a visit to the exhibition of paintings we then had hanging. This past season we were given the privilege of having 20 selected pictures from the Massey Collection, which we feel is a recognition of our ability to handle and show valuable works of art.

Is it all worth while? Well, how does one judge? Thousands of people see the pictures,

some of them, of course, only because they happen to be in the library. Not all shows are popular, but more people are looking at and discussing paintings than ever before. Hundreds of children, who formerly saw nothing original but their own school work, now form a group of most critical observers and it is to be noted that the newer forms of art expression do not offend them, although they may offend many of their elders.

We wish, intend even, that, when a municipal structure suitable to meet Brandon's needs is eventually built, it will contain gallery space for the proper showing of both the fine and applied arts and of crafts and photography. The Brandon Art Club may possibly in future suggest the foundation of a separate gallery organization, with a wider membership. But, for the moment, it has a fairly healthy child which it fondly hopes will grow to a vigorous maturity.

MARION HALES DOIG

The Granby Museum of Fine Arts

M^{ME} Henri Picard, the president of the Granby Museum of Fine Arts, smiled when she pronounced its majestic name. It is in keeping with the ambitions of the bustling industrial city of 25,000 in the Eastern Townships, fifty miles from Montreal, but Mme Picard thinks it is a little premature. "Art Centre", she said, would be better. When I visited it, this summer, it was a museum in name only.

It came into existence in May, 1950, largely as a result of the enthusiasm of Henri Chauvin, whose interest in art had stimulated him to organize sketch classes in the community. When Granby lost his leadership on his removal to Montreal in the same year, Mme Picard took over and she has carried on ever since, with the support of Mayor Hector Boivin, two citizens, Bernard Legare, who has been acting as secretary, and Robert Mitchell, treasurer, and a committee including Mrs. George Robinson and Mrs. K. L. Lubecki.

Many of the exhibitions which have been held during its four years of existence have been provided by the extension services of the

National Gallery. These have included various groups of Canadian paintings and reproductions of European masterpieces of all schools. They usually hang for two or three months. Mme Picard had to learn the art of packing and, with the help of the city hall carpenter, she became proficient—after a few sleepless nights worrying about the safety of the return of the first shipment from Ottawa.

When I was in Granby, there were two exhibitions running simultaneously—a group of magnificent photographs lent by the Italian Tourist Bureau and a collection of French historical engravings lent through the National Gallery by the French Embassy.

Several one-man shows have been presented. These have usually been of the works of artists living in the neighbourhood—the ceramics of Valentin Shabaeff, who is at St. Césaire a few miles away, the paintings of Roland Lebrun, who came from France to live in Warwick three years ago, and the primitive, surrealist paintings of Georges-Emile Daudelin, the botanist, now on a scholarship in France.

Mr. Lebrun sold only one painting, to a Montreal visitor. Out of 56, Mr. Daudelin sold 30. Publicizing had something to do with that. The museum is not a picture-selling agency, as indeed it should not be, but I understand that Mr. Daudelin had a one-man committee who saw that his exhibition received plenty of attention.

Enthusiasm and energy of this kind are necessary if the small local gallery is to be successful. But along with it must go organization and a consistent policy.

If the spirit is strong enough, the walls will be found. Up to the time of my visit to Granby, the only place available for exhibitions was the city hall—in the entrance lobby, up the central stairway, above the exhibits of the industrial museum on the second floor, or adjacent to it, and in the council chamber. The conditions were far from ideal, but the use of portable screens has helped overcome the handicaps.

There was cause for hope, Mme Picard told me, that a floor of the old post office—Granby has a handsome new one—will be given over to the museum. The other floors, I understand, are for the public library.

The Granby Museum of Fine Arts will then have a bodily existence and it will be able to start accumulating a permanent collection. But before it does that, there are other and more important activities to engage its attention. With better facilities for exhibitions, it should be able to draw on Montreal for a comprehensive series of solo and group shows, and then reach out, farther afield.

I am told that the museum's shows have stimulated such an interest in the arts that the local bookseller has sold out nearly all his art books, volumes that have lain unopened on his shelves for years. There is an educational job to be done in a small community museum and Granby has made a start, with lectures and motion pictures, notices in the press, and visits of school children. This year the city has given a grant of \$300 with which Mme Picard hopes to finance lectures during the coming winter, to educate the people and encourage their support.

Granby, like Brandon, is lucky in not being

burdened with any property at this stage. The permanent collection is the last thing, not the first, the small gallery should think about.

The essential word, uttered tactfully but firmly, is "No". In every community there are always well-meaning and generous citizens with pictures they don't know what to do with. They may be tired of them, they may have no room at home for them, they may consider them valuable and see themselves as public benefactors in donating them. Through poor judgment, or through timidity and the fear of offending patrons, most museums, even the great metropolitan institutions, have allowed themselves to become cluttered up with rubbish. If Granby doesn't say "No" at the outset, it will find that one floor in the post office isn't enough: it will have to provide itself with a morgue in the basement for the stacking of dead pictures.

It has a horrible example in front of it already. The walls of the city hall council chamber are so crowded with bad copies and other auction-room stuff that the museum can't do justice to its loan exhibitions. If the citizen who owns them loads them on the museum, the museum will be sunk before it is well launched.

Having established its right to say "No", the museum can begin, slowly and cautiously, to assemble its permanent collection. If the committee seeks, and follows, good advice, it can avoid the mistakes most public galleries make. It should first build up public interest in the museum, by loan exhibitions, well chosen, well presented and well publicized, by lectures and gallery talks and motion picture programmes. It should stimulate as much pride in it as the community now has in its zoo. It should collect money, create a purchase fund as well as a maintenance fund. If Granby—or any other small gallery, for that matter—takes its time, has a policy and a programme, refuses to buy or accept as a gift anything until the right thing comes along, it will find itself in possession of a permanent collection that will not only be nourishing to the community itself but will attract visitors from other centres. People go for miles to see Granby's zoo. Why not its museum, too?

ROBERT AYRE

The Collection of Antiquities at the Seminary of Valleyfield

UP TO the present time the museums of Canada have not been particularly rich in masterpieces of antiquity. The only outstanding collections have been those of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology in Toronto. Significant, therefore, is the step taken by the Catholic Seminary at Valleyfield, Quebec. This college is now exhibiting one of the most important private collections of ancient art now in Canada. Valleyfield is a small manufacturing city on the south side of the St. Lawrence River about forty miles from Montreal and it is hoped that these valuable works of art may remain there permanently.

The origin of this collection, which is the property of the Greek archaeologist, scholar and connoisseur, Vincent Diniacopoulos, and of his wife and their son who are residents of Montreal, is interesting. Vincent Diniacopoulos was born in Constantinople of Greek parents in the now remote era of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. He spent many years in excavation and archaeological work in Greece, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Syria and other regions of the Near East. During his travels he acquired the treasures which make up this present collection. In 1950, he and his wife, who had been living in France, decided to settle in Montreal and make Canada their permanent home. On the voyage out from Europe, they met Abbé Marc Dulude, a professor at l'Ecole Agricole de Sainte-Martine which is near Valleyfield. He was keenly interested in the collection and was largely responsible for bringing it to Valleyfield.

The group of works now on exhibition is not very large. At present, it is shown to the public in a single room. Each object, however, has been chosen with the skill, taste and knowledge of an expert. The Egyptian section is particularly rich and varied. One can see here items from many different epochs of Egyptian art, from the primitive period of the fourth dynasty, two thousand seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, down to the first century B.C. when Egypt had become a province of the Roman Empire. A great variety is represented here, statues, bas-reliefs, necklaces of semi-precious stones, seals and

scarabs. Particularly interesting are the bas-reliefs dating from the end of the Old Kingdom, around 2400 B.C., which represent various scenes of domestic and everyday life. There are some fine sculptured heads of the same period which have the massive strength, timeless repose and sense of eternity which are typical of Egyptian work at its best. Another treasure of this section is a statue in red granite of about 565 B.C., which represents one of the officials of the royal granaries.

As for Greek art, the collection contains a notable torso executed in Pentelic marble of the Greek god, Kairos, from the province of Attica in the sixth century B.C. Another rare example, of about 350 B.C., is a great marble

Stele of Rameses II

Egypt. New Kingdom. About 1250 B.C.





*Twelfth-century
Icon from the
Greek Islands*

head, more than life size, of Medusa. There are also some fine and gaily painted Attic vases, some Tanagra figures and a fifth-century funeral stele from Athens, showing a young woman receiving a gift from her husband.

The artistic achievements of the Byzantine civilization, which flourished in eastern Europe and Asia Minor for a period of almost one thousand years, has only become well known in the western world during the past half century and there are some good examples of this school in the collection, including some icons which were painted during the period A.D. 1100-1600. Some paintings on wood which were done by the Copts or the Christians of Egypt have a curious and naive flavour. This is a little known branch of religious art and few examples of Coptic paint-

ing are to be found, even in the great museums of Europe and the United States.

Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Diniacopoulos intend to add further examples of equal value and beauty to their collection. Eventually, it should be one of the most outstanding of its type in Canada, second only to those in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

The opening of the collection to the public in Valleyfield shows how the smaller cities of Canada are becoming increasingly aware of the educational importance of museums of this type. Anyone in Montreal who is at all interested in the history of ancient cultures will also find it well worth a visit, for the nearness of Valleyfield to Montreal makes it quite easy of access by car or train.

W. E. GREENING

Where to Exhibit 1954-55

<i>Society or Sponsor</i>	<i>Location and Opening Date</i>	<i>Final Date for Entries</i>	<i>Address for Application Forms</i>
Alberta Society of Artists, Winter Exhibition	February 4, 1955 Edmonton	January 19, 1955	Herbert Earle, 2110-16 St. S.W., Calgary
Annual Saskatchewan Exhibition	March 11, 1955 Saskatoon	March 5, 1955 Saskatchewan artists only	The Secretary, Art Committee, Saskatoon Art Centre, Saskatoon
Art Gallery of Hamilton, Winter Exhibition	December 3, 1954 Hamilton	November 15, 1954	Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton
British Columbia Society of Artists	April 26, 1955 Vancouver	Members & invited contributors only	Mrs. B. Bell, 2566 Marine Drive, West Vancouver, B.C.
Canadian Society of Graphic Art	To be announced	To be announced	Harley Parker, 255 Dunview Ave., Willowdale, Ontario
Canadian Group of Painters	November 19, 1954 Toronto	Members & invited contributors only	Philip T. Clark, 36 Roxborough Drive, Toronto 5
Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour	Early April, 1955	Late January, 1955	Miss Doris McCarthy, Scarborough Bluffs, P.O., Ontario
Manitoba Society of Artists	February, 1955 Winnipeg	To be announced	Miss Barbara Cook, 109 Wilmot Place, Winnipeg
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Spring Exhibition	Late March, 1955 Montreal	March, 1955	Edward Cleghorn, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Nova Scotia Society of Artists	April, 1955 Halifax	March 20, 1955	Mrs. Charles Manuel, 23 Hawthorne St., Dartmouth, N.S.
Ontario Society of Artists	January 7, 1955 Toronto	December 3, 1954	Herbert S. Palmer, 170 St. Clements Ave., Toronto 12
Royal Canadian Academy	November 20, 1954 Montreal	Entries closed October 8, 1954	Fred Finley, 63 Warland Ave., Toronto 6
Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers	March 5, 1955 Toronto	February 9, 1955	Mrs. Anne Smith Hook, 32 Mountview Ave., Toronto 9
Western Ontario Exhibition	May, 1955 London	April 20, 1955	Clare Bice, The Public Library and Art Museum, London
Windsor Art Association, Essex County Artists Exhibition	February 4, 1955 Windsor	January 22, 1955 Artists from adjoining counties only	Kenneth Saltmarche, Willistead Art Gallery, Windsor
Winnipeg Art Gallery Association, Non-Jury Exhibition	November 9, 1954 Winnipeg	November 1, 1954	Secretary, Women's Committee, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg



*Shaarey Zedek
Synagogue, Winnipeg.
Night view of Main
Entrance showing
the "Menorah"*

*Green, Blankstein,
Russell and Associates,
Architects and Engineers*

The Arts and the Modern Synagogue

HARRY MAYEROVITCH

THERE is taking place in Canada and the United States a considerable revival of synagogue building. Most of the new buildings are erected in the modern tradition, and this has created new opportunities and new problems for the architect and the artist. Modern architecture was born of the need after the first world war to provide a vast quantity of housing and industrial accommodation in a very short time. Making use of advanced techniques and rigid disciplines, and by the rejection of all superfluous decoration, the new architecture produced buildings which were pure, logical, hard and ascetic. For buildings with a strictly utilitarian purpose, this approach might have been regarded as adequate. The identical concept, however, was applied to churches and synagogues whose function was spiritual and emotional. Elaborate traditional ornament was eliminated and only the baldest symbols remained to distinguish the house of worship from the factory. The new logic swept aside all ideas of splendour, richness and romanticism. Scarcely more than lip service was paid to the old idea that an integration of painting

and sculpture with the architectural forms was imperative to attain the maximum in spiritual impact. The glorious precedent of Gothic architecture was discarded. In a wave of *bravura*, architects worked out ingenious methods of planning and construction which would by architectural means alone achieve the loftiest effects. It is true that serious and valuable results were produced. Reinforced concrete and steel trusses ingeniously used created exciting spatial divisions; the vast potentialities of light sources—natural and artificial—were carefully studied; colour on simple untextured surfaces was used for dramatic effect. But basically the need to express deeply emotional ideas in a framework which was essentially unemotional created a serious contradiction. In the case of synagogues, for a time, this conflict was not too apparent. Originally for fear of idolatry, and later by tradition, the use of the human figure had long been discouraged for synagogue decoration. Those symbols which were permitted, for example the six-pointed Star of David, had an abstract character which did not

need to disturb the sleek architectural forms.

The limitations imposed by such a rigid conception finally were recognized by planners. The Jewish faith is one of the important elements in the struggle for survival of the Jewish people. It has also been closely bound up with ethical considerations. Therefore it has a profound human content. The need to express this has presented the artist with a serious challenge. The abstract artists particularly have worked under a handicap. Having adopted principles and methods which involve the elimination of human content and an emphasis on form alone, much of their work in synagogues has been inadequate. In a Baltimore synagogue the traditional tablets of the Mosaic law are treated as two transparent superimposed elements inspired by the cubist preoccupation with superimposed planes. Instead of suggesting the immutability and eternal quality of the Mosaic law, the effect is thin and transitory. Robert Motherwell, the United States artist, in a synagogue at Millburn, New Jersey, depicts a Menorah or six-branched candelabrum in a sophisticatedly childlike manner which all but snuffs out the flaming meaning of the symbol.

This problem has not yet been entirely resolved. But it has aroused great interest among such artists as Chagall with his nostalgic memories of Jewish life of a generation ago and Lipchitz who brings to bear a strong expressionistic outlook. A new romanticism is beginning to reach into the study of the old symbols. The Burning Bush ("and the bush was not consumed") has recently been used in several versions, in painting and in sculpture. This symbol represents the survival of the Jewish people in spite of persecution and, in a broader sense, the triumph of life over death, and is an example of the increased interest in the more vital and intense use of symbolism. There has been a growing recognition, even by orthodox congregations, of the need to modify the attitude towards the use of the human figure. This opens the way for the presentation of subjects of great dramatic and emotional import, the Sacrifice of Abraham, Moses receiving the Tables of the Law, and others.

This changed attitude has also brought with it an interest in the use of textures and a revival of such techniques as mosaic and stained glass.

Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, Winnipeg

Green, Blankstein, Russell and Associates, Architects and Engineers



COAST TO COAST IN ART

Community Art in the Lake St. John District

A community art venture, in which all activities and publicity are truly bilingual, is the annual arts and crafts exhibition run by the Arvida Athletic and Recreation Association in the Lake St. John district of Quebec. English and French posters advertise it in Arvida, Chicoutimi and other centres of the area, and six weekly and three daily papers in the district give it publicity in two languages.

First presented in the auditorium in Arvida in 1944 as a non-competitive "all come, all shown" affair, it has now matured into a selective exhibition of regional painting and photography carefully chosen by a jury. The jury for 1954 was headed by Gérard Morisset, curator of the Provincial Museum of Quebec. Entries were received from 10 towns. Admission was charged, except to school children; there were over one thousand paid admissions and these, along with a grant from the provincial government and donations from local merchants, financed the undertaking.

The Arts and Crafts Committee of the Arvida Athletic and Recreation Association are the sponsors. They also offer three other exhibitions of art each year, brought from outside the district. One usually comes from the Provincial Museum in Quebec and another from the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

Montreal Museum Guide

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has published a *Short Guide to the Collections*. In his foreword, the director, John Steegman, says: "I have aimed at no more than indicating to the visitor the items of special interest". The information is concisely and well presented in a booklet of 32 pages, with Agnolo Gaddi's *Coronation of the Virgin* reproduced in colour on the cover and four pages of half-tones illustrating some of the other treasures of the Museum—El Greco and Rembrandt portraits, paintings by Daumier and Rouault, a Chinese bronze, an ancient Egyptian statue, a French thirteenth-century stone carving and a Peruvian jar.

A Non-jury Exhibition in Winnipeg

The women's committees of several art galleries in Canadian cities have been sponsoring sales of Canadian paintings as part of their promotional activities each year.

A much more ambitious venture of this kind is now being launched by the Women's Committee

of the Winnipeg Art Gallery Association. This committee is combining a non-jury exhibition, which formerly was held in Winnipeg, with their annual sale of paintings. The Committee guarantees to hang one picture from every artist sending in entries. It is hoped in this way that the exhibition will be of help not only to those artists already well known to the public but also to promising younger painters. Two cash prizes of \$250 each are also being offered; these have been donated by the Junior League of Winnipeg. The dates for the exhibition are November 9 to 18. Sculpture and ceramics will also be accepted.

Arts Council Supports National Gallery

At its ninth annual meeting, in Montreal, the Canadian Arts Council took note of the purchase of the five masterpieces of painting from the Liechtenstein Collection for the National Gallery of Canada and as a result the president, Roland Charlebois, Director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts of Montreal, wrote the following letter to the Prime Minister:

"The delegates, representing sixteen national societies concerned with the well-being of arts and letters in this country, expressed their gratification at this enrichment of Canadian life and asked me to convey it to you.

"The wealth of Canada cannot be measured by what can be taken out of the earth and we look to our elected representatives as the custodians of our cultural heritage as well as our material resources. It is to the credit of the Canadian people that the Members realize their responsibility in this regard and that the vote of \$360,000 was passed with only one dissenting voice.

"The Canadian Arts Council takes it as an encouraging indication that such institutions as the National Gallery will receive even fuller support in the future than they have been given in the past and that we can look forward to a development in the arts worthy of our greatness as a nation."

Reporting to the delegates on an interview he had in Ottawa with the Secretary of State, the Minister for External Affairs and the Minister of Citizenship, Mr. Charlebois expressed the opinion that establishment of a Canada Council, as recommended by the Massey Commission, was not far away. He said he had found that the idea was gaining ground and the climate for it was much warmer.

Permanent Collection of Saskatchewan Works of Art

The permanent collection of pictures by Saskatchewan artists purchased over the past five years by the Saskatchewan Arts Board from its annual provincial exhibition at present numbers 19 works; it is now large enough to make up a circulating display. The four bought in 1954 included three oils and a linoleum-cut, *The Grasshopper*, by MacGregor Hone of Regina. Oils were *The Bonspiel* by Kenneth Lochhead of Regina, *Early Morning at Hardy* by E. W. Dahlstrom of Hardy and *Spanish Town* by Anthony Thorn of Regina.

A Variety of Exhibitions in the Maritimes

The Maritime Art Association offers 16 travelling exhibitions and displays to its member groups and galleries this year. Particular emphasis is placed on one-man showings; groups of work by Arthur Lismer, Fritz Brandtner, Jack Beder, Lawren Harris, Leonard Brooks and David Milne are on this list. An explanatory exhibition on abstract art prepared by the students of the Fine Arts Department of Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B., contributes an educational note.

The sponsoring and distribution of silk screen prints by Maritime artists is now announced by the Association. The first example will be done this year by Jack Humphrey in an edition of 200 prints.

Officers of the Association for 1954-55 are: President, Vic Runtz, Charlottetown; Secretary, Mrs. Ruth Henderson, Sackville; Treasurer, Alex S. Mowat, Halifax.

Modern Art in Winnipeg Homes

During September, the Winnipeg Art Gallery showed a selection of modern paintings from private homes in Winnipeg. Although the most important collection, that of John A. MacAulay, was not included, as it will be exhibited later this year, it was remarkable what good material was available.

The main emphasis was on modern French works which seem to be the preference of the collectors. There were several Dufys, an oil and two water colours, also three oils by André Derain. In the exhibition, a small pencil drawing by Modigliani of his dealer and friend, Leopold Zborowski, hung next to the *Death Mask of Modigliani* by Lipchitz. Some leading German and Austrian artists were also shown.

The large and important exhibition "Design in Scandinavia" is announced for two showings only in Canada: October 19 to November 21 at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and December 17 to January 21 at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. It is now on a five-year tour of North America.

A detail of the large mural painted recently in Mexico by Alberto Tommi of Percé, Quebec. During his sojourn with his wife, the sculptor Suzanne Guité, in San Miguel de Allende last year, he was commissioned to design a mural depicting the religious manifestations which took place at that time on the occasion of the quarter-centenary of the founding of that Mexican city. The medium is vinylite on concrete.



NEW BOOKS ON THE ARTS

CANADIAN ESKIMO ART. By James Houston. 40 pp.; illustrated. Ottawa: The Queen's Printer. 25 cents.

It would be hard to find a better use for twenty-five cents than to exchange them for this remarkable little publication which reveals something of the art of those original Canadians, the Eskimos. We owe a great debt of gratitude to James Houston for bringing thousands of examples of Eskimo carvings to temperate zones. His own drawing and painting, his writing and that of Mrs. Houston, in the space of a few years, have helped to put Eskimo sculpture into its rightful place in the forefront of contemporary North American art.

The Eskimo men and women who created these works are primarily hunters and housewives and treat carving as a hobby. Contact with white men has not yet affected their style which is not self-consciously primitive but is in a living tradition. At the first glance the sculptures appear to be of the same family. They are small so as to be portable, and almost all are made from a soft, brittle green soapstone, with resulting soft and gentle outlines.

The Eskimo sculptures from life, but not in realistic detail such as is found in Rodin. It is more reminiscent of Maillol showing a love of life, of form, of texture and of rhythm. Much of the work is evidently done just for fun, but some of it attempts and achieves a deeper meaning and inevitably calls for comparison with some of our greater contemporary sculptors such as Henry Moore. It is a strange coincidence that Eskimo artists have independently arrived at so many conclusions that we associate with what is most modern in art.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Houston will pick up the pen once more and give us a much fuller account of his knowledge and impressions of Eskimos and their art.

Unfortunately the quality of the reproduction does less than justice to Bert Beaver's excellent photographs. Some of the reproductions, moreover, seem cropped a little too closely and the pages are not numbered. But these are points of detail and really do nothing to detract from this enchanting little book.

HENRY E. STRUB

THE PAINTER'S WORKSHOP. By W. G. Constable. 148 pp.; 24 plates. Toronto: Oxford University Press. \$4.50.

"Entering into the physical process by which the painting has been created, realizing how difficulties have been solved or not solved, does much to bring the spectator into the living presence of the artist," says Mr. Constable. He warns us that a knowledge of materials and processes is only a small part of it, agreeing with whoever said, "What makes a medium artistically important is not any quality of the medium itself but the qualities of mind and hand its users bring to it." Still, he adds, "a knowledge of

what materials an artist has used, and how he has used them remains indispensable for full understanding of what is present in a painting and why it is there, and it is therefore a basic element in trying to realize what the painting is as a work of art."

Mr. Constable, Curator of Paintings in the Boston Museum, former Director of the Courtauld Institute, and Slade Professor, speaks with the authority of a man who thoroughly knows his subject, but he is writing for the layman and, without popularizing, he makes the subject attractive as well as informative. After an introductory chapter in which he emphasizes the fact that painting is a craft as well as an art, he gives an illuminating outline of the artist's place in society, of the changes in his functions and working conditions over the centuries, from the time when he was a more or less anonymous artisan, working to order jointly with others, to the present time, when he paints independently, to express his own thoughts and feelings.

The physical structure of painting—the support, the ground, the medium, the chemistry of pigments,



GEORGES ROUAULT. *The Surgeon*
Stolen from the Art Gallery of Toronto

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from the
Art Gallery of Toronto

"The Surgeon"
by Georges Rouault

This painting, oil on cardboard, size 11 x 18 inches, was removed from the frame and stolen on Thursday, September 30, 1954.

Any person, or persons, having information regarding this painting should telephone or telegraph collect to:

Martin Baldwin, Director,
Art Gallery of Toronto
Grange Park, Toronto 2

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and so on—is discussed, and there is a valuable chapter on the contribution of the restorer or “conservator”. His account of the painting processes—wax, pastel, water colour, fresco, tempera, the metals (silver and gold), oil—brings him as far as the new techniques that were needed to express the new aims in the nineteenth century, but, sitting in his museum in Boston, Mr. Constable is more inclined to look back than to be aware of what is happening today. He hasn't a word to say about collages and other experiments such as using plastic resins for murals.

It is not quite up to the minute, but otherwise *The Painter's Workshop* is admirable. R.A.

THE TORONTO ART STUDENTS' LEAGUE, 1886—1904. By William Colgate. 33 pp.; 24 illustrations. Toronto: The Ryerson Press. \$2.00.

Mr. Colgate's brief account of the Toronto Art Students' League provides an interesting if not a major contribution to our knowledge of Canadian art. The League had a life of only eighteen years and did not develop into an art school like the New York organization after which it was named. Rather, it was organized by a number of what we should now call commercial artists and newspaper illustrators as an in- and outdoor sketch club. The artists, with the exception of a few like J. E. H. MacDonald, C. W. Jefferys and Frederick Brigden, never became well known.

None the less, the effect of commercial art on Canadian painting is a subject which deserves serious study, and the significance of Mr. Colgate's book is that it carries this study back a stage before the Group of Seven (who mostly began as commercial artists). Newspaper illustration at the turn of the century is reflected in the League's chief memorial, the annual calendar published from 1892 to 1904. But the most lasting contribution of this modest group was their honest and straightforward approach to the Canadian scene. In their studies of landscape and genre they achieved an admirable simplicity which was quite in keeping with the best in the past of Canadian art. This they were able to transmit to the next generation, which, however, in the persons of the Group of Seven expressed itself in much more significant and spectacular terms. But something was

lost in the process, for the artists of the League possessed the virtues of the lesser masters, the quiet intimacy and authentic flavour of their drawings was sacrificed to the austere splendours of the Laurentian Shield and the iceberg. The simple, familiar things such as rural country architecture and the pastoral landscape of southern Canada have been largely ignored in the path followed by Canadian art since 1900. R. H. HUBBARD

SHOW WINDOW OF THE ARTS

Continued from page 20

countries an authentic expression, highly poetic though it may be, of the moods and feelings and the inner vitality of Canada in 1954?

There are lessons to be learned from Venice. One is the tremendous importance attached by most other countries to the arts. In Italy, for instance, where you see workmen on a bus reading an article on Rouault in a cheap illustrated paper, you are left in no doubt as to how much concern they have for the arts. All sorts of inferences may be drawn from this, but I shall mention only one. That is the continuing need to present Canadian art abroad as well as we possibly can, something the National Gallery has insisted on for many years. But we must also make an impact by the quality of our work, by its contemporaneity and by the effectiveness of its presentation. At Venice, to be more specific, we ought to have a pavilion of our own. The cost would be a small investment with a high return. For it is here and in the other great show windows of the world that our national vigour will make itself felt, to the benefit of our prestige abroad and the stimulation of our creativeness at home.

Pablo Picasso

Still Life
oil

26 x 20



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THE ART FORUM

Dear Sir:

From time to time I have been honoured by correspondence from top-ranking executives in the business world and, with increasing regularity, their letters are taking on the deceptive appearance of being printed letters. The typesetting is of poor quality, of course, reminiscent of auto parts catalogues and cheap substitutes for typesetting by standard methods, but they do look as though they had been turned out *en masse* and mailed out to all and sundry, myself included.

Of course, when I have read the letter, as I usually do, I discover that the message is really not for mass consumption, but is intended as a personal letter.

Subsequently, I learn that these letters are the products of an electric typewriter now being widely sold and used in Canada.

COPPER PLATE GOTHIC -
LOWER CASE, DESIGNED FOR THE
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNQRST

HERITAGE - This is 10 point
fghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz. ABC

Example of type faces on electric typewriter as used and sold in Canada

Now all of this sounds as though I stand firmly in the path of progress, and that I would return to the fine penmanship of a century ago and chuck all typewriters into the nearest rubbish heap. Let me admit that I deplore the decline of handwriting as an art which carried the intimate personal touch; but let me also admit that I would hate to have to handle all of my own meagre correspondence by hand, and certainly would not expect a businessman to do so.

No, typewriters are fine; my very vigorous objection arises from the ugly letters which they imprint upon paper . . . "suitable for catalogues, price lists, and forms".

Half a millenium has passed since printing from movable types was invented; two millenia have passed since the ideal was achieved in the form and proportions of the Roman alphabet on the Trajan column; what possible excuse have the manufacturers of electric typewriters for ignoring this legacy of fine letters and serving up letters which might have come from the hands of children learning their alphabet?

I guess typewriters are here to stay, and handwriting will disappear as an art. But I find it hard to accept that letters from executives have to be "printed" in "types" which are "suitable for catalogues, price lists, and forms."

Can't something be done to make the electric typewriter an aesthetic contribution as well as a mechanical godsend?

Yours truly,

Carl Dair, Richvale, Ontario.

Dear Sir:

Allow me to express my disagreement with Mr. John Korner's article entitled "A new consciousness of form", which appeared in your last issue.

His thesis is that, since the knowledge of our world seems to be expressed (via "pure" mathematics) in more and more abstract terms, reality itself is becoming more and more abstract and in fact "more and more questionable". He concludes from this that new forms of art to be truly expressive of our time, must of necessity also be abstract. I think this reasoning is false.

The sciences with their "abstract" terminology, are developing a growing understanding of the reality of life. Phenomena, once regarded as mysterious, become clearer, more real, and increasingly subject to man's control. Atomic fission, once thought to be impossible becomes through "abstract mathematics" theoretically feasible—and finally through physics, a shattering reality. "Abstract mathematics", has made the world more real—"abstract art" is making it less intelligible. The parallel, which Mr. Korner attempts to draw between the two, simply does not exist.

We are here shown the inability of the abstract artist to face up to the impact and the full implications of present day reality. This inability is concealed by creating a world of abstruse and personal symbols, which will have "different meanings to the

artist at different times", and which cannot be explained or made intelligible to ordinary mortals. In fact, it would be "absurd" says Mr. Korner, "to ask what an artist 'really' means by his work". This attitude represents a flight from reality by denying that reality exists. One would have thought that the first atomic blast had exploded this delusion.

The future growth of art in Canada, as elsewhere, depends first, on the artist's recognizing the reality of life, and secondly, on his faith in man's ability to enrich and exalt his experiences in a real world.

H. Mayerovitch,
Montreal.

Dear Sir:

Thanks for the many creative and strongly designed covers we regularly see on the front of *Canadian Art*. It distinguishes this magazine as one not only about artists; but one designed and put together by artists. I might stress this point by calling *Canadian Art* the rich man's "American Artist." However, in the last issue I did find one fault. In Charles Fainmel's article there was a sentence reading: "The teenagers and other jazz fanciers follow the hit parade and come with preferences already made." Jazz is as much an art form as any other serious music and to have it linked with hit parade music is an insult to this art form. Thanks anyhow for a wonderful magazine.

Yours truly,
Bob McMillan, Toronto.

CONTRIBUTORS

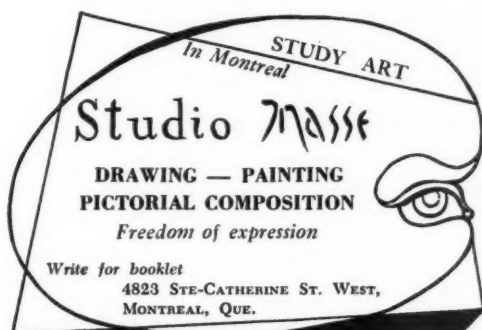
Lawren Harris is the well known Canadian artist and a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada.

R. H. Hubbard is chief curator of art at the National Gallery of Canada and was commissioner for Canada at this year's Biennale in Venice.

Harry Mayerovitch is an artist and architect of Montreal, who has done some designing for modern synagogues.

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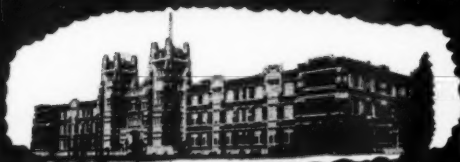
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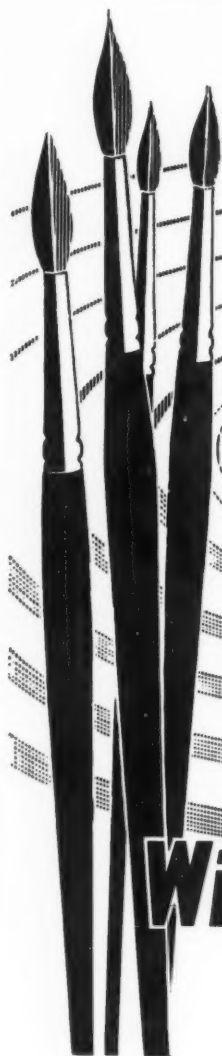
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